(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the said facility would be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) At present there is no proposal to connect Badrinath and Kedarnath temples with Video Conferencing facility, and no proposal has so far been received in this connection from any quarter.

Poor postal services

2589. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI R.K. ANAND:
SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many post offices are located in main districts in parts of rural India and that the postal services are poor in far flung villages in certain districts;

(b) if so, the States in which post offices ae situated only in districts;

(c) whether Government have plans to provide post offices in all Gram Panchayats of the States;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Postal facilities in terms of daily delivery of dak, collection of letters and sale of stamps is available to all citizens both in urban and rural areas, irrespective of terrain. However, counter facilities are extended through 1,55,295 post offices of which 89% are located in rural areas. Of these 1,26,506 are part time Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices which function in areas which do not

justify full time departmental offices. Branch Post Offices are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, income and population norms and to the extent resources are made available under Plan. These norms have been further relaxed for hilly, tribal, desert and remote areas. Since all Gram Panchayat villages would not fulfil these norms, it has not been possible to provide them with post offices. Where two norms are fulfilled, Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) are also being opened in a phased manner to provde basic postal services, subject to availability of resources. There are at present 6808 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras which provide counter services, exclusively in rural areas. In view of the above fact there are far flung villages which do not have post offices due to non- fulfilment of distance, income and population norms or which have no counter facilities through PSSKs. However, there is no State where post offices are situated only in select districts.

(c) to (e) Since post offices can be opened only subject to fulfilment of the existing norms and availability of resources, it is not possible to specify a time frame within which, this goal can be achieved.

Single Operating Licence

2950. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI wants to bring all segments of the telecom market under a single operating licence covering fixed, mobile, domestic, long distance and international calls;

(b) whether it is also a fact that TRAI wish to have uniform rules for all players;

(c) whether Government are thinking of scrapping regional fragmentation;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) how it helps the end-consumer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a consultation paper No. 3/2003 on Unified Licencing for Fixed and Mobile services on July 16, 2003 TRAI has also issued an addendum to its